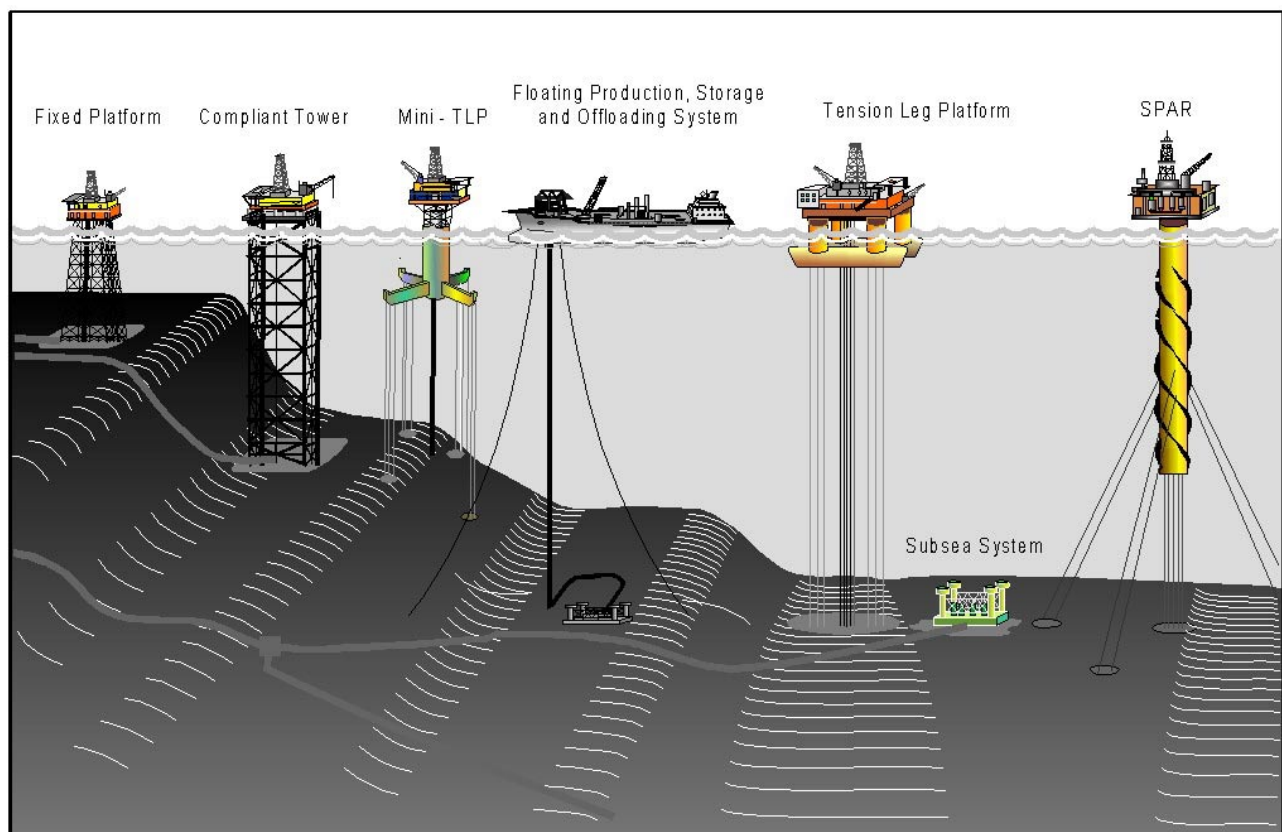


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Deepwater development systems

Source: *Deepwater Gulf of Mexico: America's Emerging Frontier*; Minerals Management Service, OCS Report MMS 2000-022, April 2000.

## APPENDIX A

### WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS

This appendix includes a summation of views and opinions expressed by stakeholders who participated in the roadmapping workshops.

#### General Comments

- Deepwater Gulf of Mexico development, in principle, could take domestic oil production from its current level today (5.9 million barrels per day) to approach the peak achieved in 1970 (9.6 million barrels per day). It is believed that some of the most productive fields of the central Gulf of Mexico are in water depths of 10,000 feet and will require drilling of wells 28,000 to 35,000 feet total depth.
- Ultra-deepwater is a challenging environment, both technically and economically, the cost of failure is high, and the market is naturally reluctant to try new technologies. In addition, new technologies must provide appropriate benefits not only to the customer and the oil and gas company, but to the suppliers and the investors as well in order to truly be implemented by industry.
- Technology is central to the natural gas and oil industry and to its performance. Ultra-deepwater development is a particularly exciting opportunity and many companies are becoming active in deepwater exploration. Many discoveries are smaller in size and will require innovative approaches to develop economically. Continuing advances in technology are critical to the development of these resources.
- Research areas should be defined and reviewed based on industry needs. These needs include a better understanding of the ultra-deepwater environment. In recent years, industry has become more focused on applied research rather than fundamental research. However, the industry recognizes there are fundamental research opportunities in the areas such as new materials, the behavior of produced fluids, and alternative methods of processing the fluids.
- R&D is a business not an activity. It must deliver a product with speed and efficiency and start/stop when appropriate. It must pull from the global asset base of the industry and the best resources (“A-team”) must be engaged. The effort must be customer focused and technology enabled, be driven by vision but measured by clear metrics, and focused to deliver near term with a sense of urgency that demands ruthless execution.
- R&D spending by the industry is very low as a percentage of revenues compared to other industries. This is basically possible because in the global economy, industry can “coast” on older technology by applying this technology in other areas of the world. In newer reservoirs and easier drilling environments around the world (compared to the remaining opportunities in the United States), new technology is less in demand. The industry will develop the technology to produce in deepwater and ultra-deepwater in the United States, but absent some outside stimulus, these developments will come at a very incremental pace. If there is a national interest in increasing U.S. domestic production in the near term, then stimulus could be applied to achieve this goal.

## Investors Workshop

- Industry understands that deepwater development is an important business. Investment in technology must be justified either through the proprietary and strategic advantage that it offers to operators or through the attractive to investors because of larger return expectations.
- The S&P 500 is now composed of about 5 percent of energy companies. In 1980, it was about 28 percent. Since then, the market experienced a complete erosion of the capital base that was dedicated towards energy. Technology, on the other hand, is 30 percent of the S&P today and, back in 1980, it was less than 10 percent. The market has experienced a dramatic shift in the capital flows, along with a dramatic shift in the psyche of today's investor. Today's investor is more diversified, looks for liquidity and quick return, and is powered with information. They can afford to bounce from investment to investment very quickly. This creates an incredibly volatile environment for stocks that are related to commodities.
- There is a sense that investors are not familiar with the degree to which the energy business has historically invested in and implemented leading edge technology. Most investors believe the petroleum industry has fostered incremental rather than innovative or revolutionary technology. They also do not believe that major oil and gas companies are forward thinking in their approach to running their business and, perhaps these investors are not aware of the complexity of the many processes in the oil industry.
- Investment in technology for ultra-deepwater development will require collaboration across all areas of a single company and between companies. This collaboration must be pervasive, not just between oil and gas companies, but collaboration between oil and gas companies and their service providers; between oil and gas companies, governmental agencies, and non-governmental organizations; and between oil companies and investors.
- A major investment barrier is not having stable commodity prices and getting everyone to believe that they will stay stable. Many companies were not convinced the prices would stay stable and delayed their capital expenditures, and deferred exploration actions further out. This also affected the field service companies and forced them to wait on the sidelines.
- The independent producers and the E&P companies are now getting the benefit of increased cash flow because of the recent higher prices, but because the Wall Street is not rewarding them on their stock price, companies are obtaining better shareholder value by buying back their shares and paying down debt. Thus, instead of applying funds to exploration and drilling, companies are doing other things, which further exacerbate prices and supply problems.
- The investment climate for the next generation of global oil and gas resources development is being set now. Investment dynamics, once committed preferentially to deepwater or, alternatively, to the more obvious oil and gas exporting nations, could change the entire development of industry.

## Producers Workshop

- For most operators, ultra-deepwater are depths greater than 6,000 to 10,000 feet. Extreme depths pose two challenges. One challenge occurs when there is a shallow target in 10,000 feet of water. The other occurs when there is a deep structure, maybe 15,000 to 20,000 feet deep below the 10,000 feet of water. Thus, a key challenge is that reservoirs lying under 6,000 to 10,000 feet of water with productive formation depths of

20,000 to 25,000 cannot be drilled to and are not producible with current technology.

- Challenges associated with deepwater operations are a lack of deepwater infrastructure, the need for dramatically reduced drilling and development costs, improving reservoir definition and characterization, increasing productivity and recovery, improving reliability, and insuring safe operability.
- Riser length, size, and weight necessary for deepwater drilling impose demands on surface facility buoyancy which translates into large, capital intensive drilling units with commensurately high daily rig rates. Rig rates for ultra-deepwater can range from \$200,000 to \$300,000 per day.
- Currently, deepwater accumulations of 100 million barrels and less are borderline economic and 88 percent of worldwide deepwater reservoirs are thought to be limited to this magnitude. To make these reservoirs economic requires reduced cost of rig operations, reduced cost of facilities, and reduced cycle time from discovery to first oil, in addition to addressing flow assurance issues and wellbore stability issues.
- Limitations in reservoir quality and areal measurements combined with the high cost of ultra-deepwater rigs also causes a concern and possible choice between more appraisal versus accelerated development. More appraisal causes production delays and higher appraisal costs, but reduces uncertainty and allows more efficient facility design. Accelerated or phased development lowers appraisal costs and reduces the time to first oil recovery, but results in less than optimal facility design.
- Infrastructure improvements will need to be addressed, including roads, pipelines, logistical support bases, coordination with states, and education of the workforce in new technologies.
- In order to make the deepwater projects economic, production requirements per well are estimated to be 30 to 40 million barrels per year due to large initial deployment and subsequent drilling and completion costs.
- Independent producers and small entrepreneurs should have input to the process and benefit from the program to encourage competition in the respective marketplaces in which these entities compete. Independents clearly stated a desire to explore, produce, and partner with the majors in the Gulf of Mexico. The increasing number of leases held by independents is proof of this trend.
- Independents offer the desire to help and work with the research organizations and often bring in creative individuals who tend to be entrepreneurial. On the other hand, independents, as smaller companies, do not have the capital resources for R&D and/or large investments.
- Involvement of independent producers in deepwater is necessary as part of the solution in assuring development of deepwater resources. The independents are good at mobilizing people, assets, and technology to move forward.
- Deepwater production operations must be performed in a safe manner to protect both the worker and the environment. Safety and environmental challenges represent another dimension of the technology challenges faced by operators.
- High rig rates and operational costs limit the number of exploration, appraisal, and development wells. This, combined with limitations on well testing, causes uncertainty in reservoir characterization, i.e., size, fluid volumes, fluid quality, and fluid mobility. These uncertainties raise the bar on field size needed to justify development.

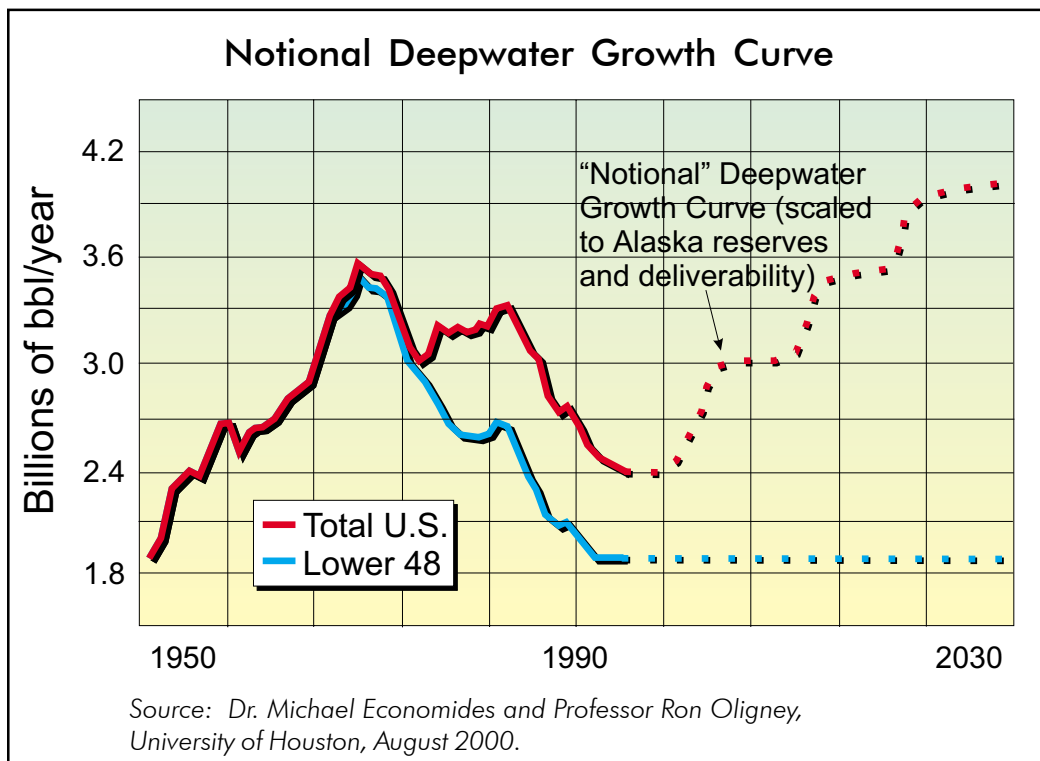
- Station keeping technology is challenged, considering high current loads and the threat of hurricanes. This can lead to emergency drive-offs or drift-offs, which require riser disconnects from the sea floor wellheads and cause risk of damage due to the magnitude of the weights and momentum involved.
- Seismic or other remote imaging of geologic strata is challenged by salt layers which can mask true field size and result in costly dry holes or poorly developed fields.
- The oil and gas industry should take advantage of e-commerce and information management tools, i.e., establishments of a knowledge management network to create an environment through which everyone is connected for instant exchange of data and information. Such a network can be used to solve operational problems and expedite the decisionmaking process.
- Facility design itself is pushed to technology limits due to water depths in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico and the deepwater environment with challenges of vortex induced vibration in the drilling riser, mooring system design, and production process train sizing.
- The high levels of recoverable fluid volumes needed per well causes lower quality reservoir sections to be bypassed and less efficient exploitation of recoverable natural gas and oil resources. As reservoir quality reduces, the spacing between economically justified conventional wells increases in direct opposition to the need of what would be required to maximize recovery and minimize bypassed oil.
- The remote nature and deepwater environment increases the cost of mobilizing and performing well workovers or interventions, which are required to increase ultimate recoveries in shelf and land well analogs. With intervention options and improvements, ultimate recovery percentages can be increased by approximately 20 percent. High intervention costs not only limits recovery percentages achievable but it also increases sensitivity to production system reliability.
- Rough sea floor terrain, the threat of mud slides, and the distances back to existing infrastructure increase pipeline cost burdens, which must be borne by new field developments.
- Sea floor temperatures near freezing exacerbate the formation of hydrate and wax plugs in flowlines.
- The young geologic nature of deepwater reservoirs means they are mostly unconsolidated which challenges wellbore stability during drilling and long term completion reliability during production.
- Being able to safely discharge drilling muds and cuttings in every offshore province is key to the success of the industry. It has helped the industry to reduce costs and also manage environmental impacts. On the positive side in the ultra deepwater, discharges are in fact adding energy or nutrients into that environment. In 6,000 to 10,000 feet of water, the sea floor is a very low-energy environment. A positive benefit might well be the fact that as nutrients are increased, energy is added to the system, which may improve biodiversity.
- Properly addressing environmental issues is critical to making the deepwater and ultra-deepwater reservoirs an attractive energy resource. Concerns include accidental release of oil, chemical products, water and sediment quality, air quality and emissions, impacts on biological communities, operations environments, and socioeconomic impact. Two issues of particular interest are air emissions and the potential for larger volumes of hydrocarbons to be released in the event of a loss of well control.



- The public perception of oil spills is that the industry spills millions of barrels of oil all over the world. The truth is, if the industry were doing that, they certainly would not be in business today. There are a number of ways that the industry can improve its public perception by communicating advances in technology for containing oil spills.
- Workshop attendees noted that the Department of Energy has funded other models for collaboration such as the Partnership for New Generation Vehicles (PNGV) program funded at \$263 million per year, the Industries of the Future program funded at \$70-90 million per year, and the USABC program funded at \$250 million per year with 50/50 cost sharing.
- Dr. Michael Economides and Professor Ron Oligney of the University of Houston presented the following graph at the OSTR Producers Workshop held on August 1, 2000, in Houston, Texas, to indicate the significance of deepwater Gulf of Mexico oil production potential.

## Technology Workshop

- Employing new technology is a significant barrier in and of itself. In ultra deepwater, the initial technology deployment represents a multi-million dollar investment. The risks and costs of failure for initial deployment are high. Testing of prototype technologies in marine environments or onshore before deepwater deployment, is an expensive challenge. Producers find it difficult to compromise current production and risk increased expense to support field trials of new technology.
- A key challenge concerning investment for the ultra deepwater involves the necessity to integrate highly complex systems, yet, it seems that less truly integrated R&D is being performed by industry. Market performance is not solely determined by the performance of the technology, but considerably by the system within which it integrates. Because field development expenses are significant, new technologies must rightly meet stringent testing and quality assurance requirements.



These activities naturally impact the pace of new technology deployment and can adversely impact the economic return of the technology investments.

- Development of dual gradient drilling and riserless drilling will help in reducing costs. Advantages of these technologies include lower risk of formation damage, reduced number of casing strings, and larger wells for higher production rates. These technologies would also allow smaller, older drilling rigs to operate in deepwater. Areas requiring further work include development of subsea pumping and return of mud and cuttings to the surface thereby reducing the hydrostatic load at depth on the formation.
- The cost of operations or “activation” in deepwater needs to be reduced, characterized by some stakeholders as \$13/barrel, comprising \$3/barrel for finding, \$5/barrel for development, and \$5/barrel for operations. Targeted cost would be \$9/barrel, comprising \$3/barrel each for finding, development, and operations. This represents a 40 percent reduction in development and operation (activation) costs. Some of these savings can be realized from advances and improvements in prestack depth imaging, dual gradient drilling (fewer casings, slimmer wells, safer operations), riserless drilling, extended reach drilling, use of intelligent wells (lower intervention costs, real-time production monitoring, maximized production rates), and flow assurance.
- There is an extreme aversion to “first-time” utilization of any technology, particularly in deepwater. Companies do not want to take a chance and risk delays in production start up and/or costly production shut downs. They prefer new technologies to be proven both in quality assurance and in application before they can be considered for actual field installation.
- A “high-intensity” approach to design and commercialization is required to reduce the new technology deployment time frame or the cycle time. Further, evolutionary, rather than revolutionary, technologies will be able to recover deepwater offshore resources.
- Other barriers to recovering natural gas and oil from such greater depths are lack of experience and the cost of dual density drilling and expandable tubulars. The problem is associated with drilling and completing a large enough wellbore to allow significant daily production, i.e., 10,000 to 30,000 barrels a day. This would require five-and-a-half inch tubing or greater. Although expandable tubers will allow expansion of bore holes, they are expensive and new to the marketplace. New tools and equipment and more experience in this type of drilling and completion are required to reduce the cost of operations.
- Use of Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUVs) to search for hydrocarbon deposits also would reduce exploration risk. Advantages of AUVs include increased survey efficiency by reducing the reliance on the surface vessel, and the ability to obtain more accurate exploration data. However, further cost reduction and improvements are needed to increase AUV reliability, sensor resolution, and power consumption.
- Utilizing Floating Production Storage and Offloading (FPSO) and/or Floating Storage and Offloading (FSO) units can spread the capital expenditures over several fields. These are proven existing technologies and can eliminate the cost and technical risk of deepwater pipelines, and reduce flow assurance problems. Gas must be produced and exported, i.e., modular, compact gas-to-liquid conversion units would eliminate the need for deepwater pipeline and liquids can be delivered closer to the consumer. MMS and U.S.



Coast Guard approvals are required. Good operational scenarios for emergency conditions (i.e., for hurricanes and spill prevention and containment) also need to be developed.

- There are advanced technology and expertise that exist within the national laboratories that could have a positive impact on increasing production and increasing deepwater reserves. However, an easier access to this “treasure chest” with “better ways of doing business” needs to be established. Communication must be both to and from each party for optimum results.
- Alignment and focus are also barriers to technology development. Internally, within E&P companies, there is a need to align the technologists with the operations and the operational teams; and then there is the need to have an alignment between the E&P companies, the vendors, NGOs, and the regulators so the technology solutions are deployed and represent ongoing vital business opportunities for the companies and the vendors. The industry can benefit if all pieces were aligned and investments were focused for more effective use of limited capital and human resources available.
- Public funds for demonstration and/or testing will accelerate technology commercialization. Technologies should also offer economic return not only in offshore but also in shallow waters, as well as in onshore applications.
- Basic research is necessary in ultra deepwater environments to establish a clear understanding of the physical and ecological factors that will effect the types of technology that are utilized.
- The industry (particularly majors) has a culture that has been slow to embrace change. The preference has been for a slow evolution versus revolutionary change. Disruptive

technologies are ignored until old solutions have been totally played out.

- Moving processing and pumping systems to the seafloor would reduce capital cost of production facilities. This would eliminate or reduce surface facility costs, lower pipeline size and costs, and reduce flow assurance problems. Further development is required on subsea separation equipment, subsea pumping, and power distribution and control.
- Gas hydrate formation is perhaps one of the more challenging issues that industry will have to face in the ultra deepwater. There are a number of proposals using various treatment chemicals, but ultimately the goal is prevention. Treatment is extremely difficult, which is of great importance and concern to industry in the area of technology development.

### Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) Workshop

- NGOs vary in purpose and constituents and, although they are very diverse, they share overlapping interest and constituents. They consists of both environmental scientific organizations as well as socially directed groups. Because they are stakeholder in this process, they are expected to bring a balanced approach to deepwater development.
- Concerted effort is necessary to ensure that no undue duplication of effort causes delay from the time of concept to commercial application. Limited resources exist in the research laboratories, regulatory agencies, and the NGO community. It is important that all parties involved marshal the efforts of all stakeholders to ensure sustainable development.

- Accepted analytical procedures are needed to ensure that the full spectrum of impacts are defined and where possible, mitigated to ensure the highest quality of resource utilization. Analytical tools include both cost benefit analysis and life cycle analysis.
- Environmental concerns are of paramount importance. The new architecture and new technologies should target low greenhouse gas emissions, reduced discharges of pollutants, near zero spill volumes, and continued stewardship of the Nation's resources and the environment in general.
- Given the remoteness of the location and the uniqueness of the technological advancements necessary to achieve ultra deepwater exploration and production, fundamental trust must be established between the industry, the regulators, and other stakeholders through cooperation and sound process.
- Health, safety, and environmental issues will play a role in ultra deepwater development. An existing problem with the oil and gas industry is its reputation. The public perception of environmental performance has significantly hindered the ability of the industry to access offshore oil and gas resources. A very important role for the industry is to look at technologies that can more effectively improve environmental and health and safety performance as a means of building public trust.
- There is a need for training programs on deepwater drilling and production in terms of health and safety, hazards, and the environment. If workers are not adequately trained to operate in these environments, industry will have a problem, particularly in personnel safety.
- A critical problem currently faced by industry is recruitment and retention of personnel. Unfortunately, the oil and gas industry has

developed a reputation for up and down cycles of cutting and hiring, which makes it very difficult for industry to recruit and hire qualified engineers and workers. The industry must find ways to make itself more attractive to new graduates.

- Many key environmental NGOs are not yet focused on the ultra-deepwater ecosystems. Greater outreach and education are necessary to engage them in developing technologies during the early stages of development.
- The ecosystems at ultra-deepwater depths are still being explored, many for the first time. Coordination of research has the potential to enhance our scientific knowledge of these ecosystems, and the demands they place on the new architectures being developed.
- The longer response times to reach a leak or spill at depth will require redundancies in engineering and the development of new fail-safe mechanisms and technologies. These same innovations stand to enhance environmental protection at shallower depths or onshore, thereby multiplying the commercialization potential of and technology developed.

## Government Workshop

- Government agencies will need to coordinate their policies, regulations, and permitting requirements to streamline and fast track procedures to assist demonstrations of new technologies. Further, federal and state governments, industry, service companies, national laboratories, and investors need to work together as a team for successful technology commercialization as a single entity alone cannot make it happen.
- An equally important challenge for the industry in offshore development is statutory and regulatory requirements, i.e., those under the Clean Water Act, Oil Pollution Act, Coastal

Zone Management Act, and the Clean Air Act. DOE has aided the industry in the development of synthetic drilling fluids and has worked very closely with EPA in promulgating regulations that allow industry to use synthetic drilling fluids offshore and to be able to discharge the cuttings.

- DOE can play a role in bringing together those with technology, investors, and operators that are willing to try new technologies -- three necessary ingredients for successful commercialization.
- Funding research and development off the critical path of specific field developments is a role that the federal government (e.g., DOE) could play after definition of a new framework for deepwater developments, in addition to considering deepwater royalty relief, tax incentives, and other measures for new technology application.
- Financial incentives should be considered to accelerate the adoption rate of new technologies and to accelerate the growth of deepwater production beyond a status quo baseline forecast.
- The average technology commercialization cycle is about five years from its inception. This is often a significant barrier to new technology commercialization as companies seek faster return on their investments. A DOE role could be pushing forward promising technologies, and acting as a catalyst in bringing together technology providers, technology users, and technology investors.
- Regulatory acceptance of new technology is a key area where industry is making headway and is a key part of the process of evolving technologies. All interested parties need to continue to work together so that new technology can be adopted in the deepwater developments in a safe and environmentally sound manner.
- Regulations and technology must be coordinated, i.e., regulations should recognize technology capabilities and technology must recognize regulatory needs. In addition, regulations must provide a means to allow or promote the introduction of new technology that provides adequate assurance of its safety.



## APPENDIX B

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